

A Plea for Peace

Delivered Before Fifteen Thousand Men
and Women at the Coliseum, Chicago,
November 29th, 1915

BY

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*The world war—The catastrophe it portends
to all nations—The moral forces of Christen-
dom invoked by Pope Benedict are strong
enough to end it—How they can be set in motion
and made effective by President Wilson*

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A PLEA *for* PEACE

At the Chicago meeting called by the Knights of Columbus on November 29th, to support the Pope's appeal for peace, the great Coliseum was packed to the roof, and some three thousand persons turned away. In the vast audience were representatives of practically every civic, benevolent and religious body in the entire community, without distinction of race or creed.

Judge Samuel Alschuler of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, presided. The proceedings were opened by Mr. George F. Mulligan, Chairman of the Committee on Arrangements, who felicitated Chicago on the union of such varied elements in working for the great cause that had brought them together, after which Mr. William N. Brown, State Deputy for Illinois of the Knights of Columbus, introduced the Chairman in a brief but very forceful speech.

Judge Alschuler began by saying, amid loud applause and much laughter, that while he was always prepared for unusual developments in such an unusual city as Chicago, there was one condition that he never thought would have been possible, and that was to find himself—a Jew—presiding over a meeting convoked by the Knights of Columbus. But he esteemed it auspicious as it was unusual to find elements which had formerly been divided by distrust or inflamed by dislike of each other, now united in one solid force to support a plea for peace to be voiced by a man who had become prominent in the Catholic Church by his religious work, and who had also become prominent in American citizenship by his patriotic work, as a member of Congress, and as a steady champion of peace and justice everywhere, whom he now presented to the audience—the Honorable W. Bourke Cockran, of New York.

Mr. Cockran, who was received with loud applause, the entire audience rising to its feet, said:

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Listening to the very stirring and impressive words with which these proceedings were opened, I could not help feeling that this meeting, even though it produce no other results, has already vindicated itself by the extraordinary numbers (embracing every element of your civic life) which it has brought together for a common purpose—the loftiest that human beings could cherish. For here, as you, Sir, have well said, we find all the moral forces of this great community (kept apart hitherto by differences of creed or race) uniting in a single movement to end the deadly war which for more than a year has been devastating the fairest countries of Europe, and which threatens all civilized nations with injuries that are immeasurable.

This is a meeting of Americans without qualification or condition of any kind—of Americans who value their citizenship above all things—not alone for the high privileges it bestows, but in even larger degree for the sacred duties it enjoins. We are here—Catholic and Protestant—Jew and Christian—not abating in any degree the fervor of our religious convictions, but remembering only that we are all Americans—to consider conditions which vitally affect the whole fabric of civilization, from the standpoint not merely of America first, but of America only.

A plea for peace before an American audience is no longer a mere expression of sympathy for nations scourged by calamities from which we believe ourselves to be exempt.

At the first outbreak of this dreadful war, we fondly believed that its ravages could be confined to the countries then engaged in it, and that it would not endure beyond a few months. But already it has lasted sixteen months. Its theatre has been continuously widening. During its

progress other nations have been drawn into its vortex. The end of it no man can foresee. The devastation it has actually wrought, however, makes it absolutely clear that if this conflict be prolonged until the belligerent nations on one side or the other shall have been exhausted, then the prosperity of all nations will be ruined, and the very existence of the race itself imperilled.

Conceive for a moment its actual ravages. Millions of human beings have already lost their lives. It has been stated in the English House of Lords by one of its most conspicuous members (who was but recently its presiding officer—and his statement has never been contradicted) that the number maimed and rendered helpless for life in all the different belligerent countries reaches the stupendous figure of fifteen millions. The value of property actually destroyed by contending armies, together with the amount of money already expended by the different belligerent governments in conducting this war amount to over twenty billions of dollars, a sum greater than the combined national debts of all civilized countries before the war broke out.

The awful effect of these losses on the unfortunate countries which are the theatres of this war, no words at our command can describe, or even suggest. Nor is it necessary that I should attempt to describe them. So far as they can be measured from a distance I am sure every one here realizes them fully and deploras them deeply. For the men who have fallen in battle your prayers have been freely offered, that they be afforded eternal rest in the Bosom of their God. For the larger number who have been wounded, maimed, impoverished and expatriated you have generously contributed money that their distress might be relieved in some degree.

To-night in the time at my disposal I shall confine myself to a single aspect of these disasters which, so far as I know, has not yet been discussed, and that is the very serious consequences they portend to all civilized nations of the

earth, under the peculiar conditions, social and economic, which have arisen during the last century.

The most conspicuous feature of that period has been an enormous growth in population throughout the world. This growth has centered entirely in cities. In rural districts the tendency of population has been downward rather than upward.

Now these great urban communities, in the very nature of things, live literally from hand to mouth. No great city can produce the food on which its population subsists, nor provide its inhabitants with the raw materials of their industry. All these must come from outside its limits.

A spectator looking down from a lofty eminence at a great city like Chicago is struck at once by great buildings with tall chimneys from which volumes of smoke are steadily rising—the incense offered by industry to the God who has decreed that by labor alone must every want of man be supplied. But whence comes that smoke? Nothing which those buildings contain, not a single element of which the structure itself is composed, was produced here in Chicago. That smoke could not be found rising Heavenward here if coal had not been brought into the city from some distant coal mine. The bricks and the stones and the woodwork that constitute the building, must have been supplied by labor expended far away. And in each factory the different elements that constitute the raw materials of its finished product must be contributed from varied climes. And in the great shops and stores where the workers employed in these factories exchange the wages gained by their labor for the commodities necessary to their support, all the articles they purchase are themselves products of labor expended in every quarter of the globe.

The very life of a great city depends on a continual flow towards it of food supplies and raw materials of industry, which are exchanged against a continual outward tide of commodities produced by the industry of its own population. As these tides swell populations increase. Should they fall

populations must diminish. A great city is not maintained solely by its own inhabitants. Its existence depends upon all the labor and all the resources of all the world.

The foundations of this city are not on the ground that it occupies. The foundations of its buildings rest on the soil of Illinois. The foundations of its industrial life, that is to say, its real foundations are in the industrial energies of men exercised everywhere.

Since every city depends for its subsistence upon uninterrupted supply of the commodities which constitute its means of subsistence and the basic materials of its industry, the loss of men numbering millions in the full tide of their youth and in the very flower of their productive capacity from the industrial forces of the world is matter of serious moment to you and to the people of every other great city. But destruction of human life and maiming of human beings are not the only injuries this war has inflicted upon the productive powers of mankind. Its destruction of property and diversion of capital from productive enterprises of industry to destructive enterprises of war is an additional restriction to the prosperity of the world and an additional menace to the human race.

The efficiency of each man in production depends upon the capital available to facilitate his labor, and the amount of capital available to facilitate labor in any one part of the world is the entire capital of the whole world. When capital becomes scarce the cost of it increases, that is to say the rate of interest rises. When it is abundant it becomes cheap and rates of interest fall.

Owing to the increased rates of interest already caused by the loss of property amounting to twenty billions of dollars and diversion from production to destruction of all the capital these warring countries can command, any industrial enterprise: the erection of a house, the building of a railway, or the construction of a great public improvement will cost now more than three times what it would have cost twenty-five years ago. Indeed it is doubtful if capital for construc-

tion of a great public improvement like the establishment of transit facilities for a city of this size could be obtained at the present time on any terms whatever. Scarcity of capital therefore menaces the prosperity of cities in two ways: By increasing the cost of producing commodities it raises the cost of living. By restricting production it diminishes the demand for labor and thus depresses the rates of wages.

So we see this war, by incapacitating many millions of men from industry and destroying capital to such a vast extent, has seriously affected the conditions of life not merely in the countries which have been the theatre of this destruction, but here in Chicago, in New York, and every other city of the globe.

The first effects of this devastation were clearly evident last winter in the widespread unemployment which afflicted this and all other cities. It is true that recently a demand for munitions of war has caused an apparent improvement in our industrial conditions. But that appearance is delusive. It must be obvious that the moment this war is over the demand for these war materials will cease. The capital and the men that have been diverted to production of them from other industrial enterprises will be reduced to idleness for a season at least. A serious dislocation of industry must follow. The panic which has followed every war and the prolonged industrial depression while attempts to repair its ravages were in progress, will both follow this war but aggravated to a degree commensurate with the unparalleled destruction it will have wrought.

I beg you to observe that hitherto we have been considering the degree to which this population and the population of every city throughout the world must be affected by the devastation and ruin already caused by this war. But picture to yourselves the fearful consequences if it should be continued for two years as some believe (and they are the best informed), or for one year as seems certain now unless some force as yet passive can be invoked to end it. Assum-

ing that the same rate of casualties will continue, the number killed and maimed at the end of one year will be doubled and at the end of two years they will be trebled. And these do not include any of the old or the infirm. They are all men in the full tide of youth. And the destruction of capital, it is safe to assume, will be complete. Nothing capable of destruction will be left. The sources of life itself already seriously impaired will be injured beyond repair, and the very existence of the human family must be seriously threatened. If so many millions of men in the very flower of their youth are destroyed or mutilated, how can the race be preserved?

But it is in great cities that the most grievous results will inevitably follow such devastation of life and property. Under conditions of constantly increasing production more than two million human beings have been attracted here to the shores of Lake Michigan, where they and the structures in which they toil or dwell, and the highways over which they and the products of their labor are transported, constitute this great City of Chicago. During the same period and under similar conditions five millions have been attracted to the mouth of the Hudson, where they constitute the City of New York. Everywhere throughout the world new cities sprang into existence and grew with amazing rapidity while in older cities populations increased to a degree without parallel or precedent in all the experience of man. The majority of these populations have always been able to support themselves hitherto in conditions which were constantly improving and which during the last decade were of such comfort as would have been considered luxurious even a generation ago. But if this war continue until millions of human beings are killed or incapacitated, and all the capital of the world—except what may survive in this country—is destroyed, it is perfectly evident that there will not remain sufficient supply of raw materials to afford these immense populations employment, nor of commodities to afford them food and subsistence.

In a city where five millions are now living in com-

parative comfort, means of subsistence may remain sufficient to support two millions. And in a city which now contains two millions and a half means of subsistence might remain sufficient to support one. But what is to become of the surplus populations? Whither can they go? There is absolutely no place to which they can turn their steps with any hope of improving their conditions. They cannot go back to the country because there they had no opportunity to sell their labor even in more prosperous times. A struggle for existence in each city must necessarily ensue, which will take the form of competition among laborers for employment; one man offering to work for lower wages than another is earning. A man who had been accustomed to receive five dollars a day will find himself forced to compete with an unemployed man of equal ability, willing to work for four and a half dollars a day. The man accustomed to receive four and a half dollars must compete with another ready to work for four dollars and so on down the list until no man would be working for wages so low that some other man under the pressure of want, actual or approaching, would not be found eager to take his place at still lower wages.

There is no fountain that can be tapped for relief of this distress, because conditions that reduce workers to such desperate plight will also deprive employers of profits or opportunity of profits. Starvation is the only outcome and when men cannot produce by peaceful industry sufficient to meet their necessities, the strongest among them will strive by violence to seize anything that may appease hunger. All history shows that populations which have been called into existence by abundance, if they find themselves doomed to extinction by famine never disappear in peaceful submission, but always in riot, resistance and confusion.

The danger which this war then portends to us and to all civilized nations is insufficient means of subsistence for populations of great cities, provoking attempts of men maddened by starvation to resist a fate which alas! their

violence instead of averting or even retarding can only accelerate. This danger must be obvious, I think, to any mind enlightened by the study of history and capable of judging events that are current in the light of events that have passed.

But there is another result—and an appalling one—which this war may produce that must be considered if all its dreadful potentialities are to be realized. When it first broke out this country resolved to be neutral, and the resolution being honestly formed we fondly believed it could be easily kept. But soon we found that maintenance of our neutrality was beset by grave difficulties, and these multiplied so rapidly that if this conflict be prolonged there is grave reason to apprehend we ourselves may be drawn into it. Already serious injuries have been done us by both belligerents. It is not necessary now to detail them. It is enough to say that at this moment we are in controversy or correspondence with belligerent countries on both sides over incidents of which we have abundant reason to complain. Now, wherever there is a discussion or dispute between two countries there is always danger of conflict. And if this dreadful conflagration should extend to the United States it is no exaggeration to say that the last hope of civilization will be dispelled and the outlook of the human family will be desperate.

Conceive the consequences that must ensue if seizure of our merchant ships at sea should plunge this country into war with England. War with Germany would be just as deplorable from every moral point of view, and we as citizens of the United States would regret it, just as deeply. It would however be impossible now to forecast its scope or its result. But war with England owing to our geographical position must immediately precipitate a condition which civilization could hardly survive. Every foot of the four thousand miles constituting our Canadian frontier would at once become a theatre of conflict, and of conflict between

men of such stuff that it would be a struggle to the death of one or the other.

To the south of us a country now torn by factions would no longer be restrained in any degree by our proximity or by apprehension of our watchful vigilance. Ruin of its industrial and social life would be inevitable. India quivering with unrest would soon be convulsed with revolution. Between China and Japan questions now pending would be pressed for settlement, with submission or conquest of the weaker nation the sole outcome. South America, the only region which would remain capable of furnishing munitions of war or articles of food, would become at once the theatre of endless intrigues resulting almost inevitably in conflict. Australia and Africa are already plunged in this maelstrom of sword and flame. The whole globe would be in conflagration.

No such cataclysm has ever yet convulsed the world. The fall of the Roman Empire which has always been considered the greatest disaster that ever befell the race affected only the western part of Europe. The eastern part and all Asia with its teeming millions, remained practically unmoved by it. And yet the fall of Rome very nearly entailed destruction of the whole European population! What must be the outcome of a cataclysm that involved the whole globe? Where could there be found an influence to stay its ravages? Where a force to repair them? What but universal destruction could follow? And this peril actually hangs over the world now, suspended by nothing stronger than the judgment or sense of a single individual. A foolish act or even a foolish word by some sea captain seizing an American ship might draw us irretrievably, instantly, into this vortex of fury, kindling fires of destruction that must consume the world.

Surely when civilization is suffering such injuries and in such imminent peril of destruction the supreme law of self-defense enjoins on it the employment of every force that it

can command for its own preservation. Now, what agencies and resources can civilization invoke to safeguard itself by ending this war and establishing a genuine peace?

Is it possible to end this war and establish permanent peace before additional millions are killed, maimed and wounded in the countries which are its theatre, before all other countries are impoverished and before Christian civilization itself is wrecked? I think it is.

Such a peace, however, cannot be established by force. Certainly not by any exercise of physical force on our part. We have already seen that our participation in this conflict would simply mean immediate precipitation of the disastrous consequences which its prolongation renders probable. But there remain the moral forces of Christendom and these I believe are powerful enough to save civilization from the disasters already brought upon it by the embattled military forces of the world, and to avert the peril of much graver disaster with which it is threatened.

These moral forces Our Holy Father the Pope who is their Depositary has already invoked. This vast gathering of men and women (many of whom do not acknowledge his spiritual authority) is the first answer to his appeal. And here in this country where his appeal to the moral forces of civilization has met this most impressive response, we find an agency clothed by Almighty God in His own inscrutable way with ample power to set these forces in motion. That agency is the President of the United States, and he can make these moral forces effective for restoration of peace, without in the slightest degree compromising the neutrality of this country.

It is the peculiar feature of this war acknowledged by everybody, that no one knows the object for which it is waged. I am not now discussing how it was provoked. That is a matter which will be determined by posterity whose judgments are infallible, inexorable and irreversible. But it is an astounding fact that this conflict, which has already caused the most extensive injury to property and life ever

inflicted upon the human family, is waged without any definite object that either belligerent has specified or avowed.

We have indeed heard from one side that peace will never be made until a certain brand of "militarism" is destroyed, "weak nations given a charter of liberty," and "all nations guaranteed the right to pursue in freedom and safety the pathway of civilization." And we have heard another side declare that this war will not be ended until its "legitimate place in the sun" has been secured, "freedom of the seas" established and the "iron ring of hostility" with which it believes itself to have been surrounded is shattered to pieces. But all these phrases indicate merely a state of mind, not any definite purpose. They belong to that order of expressions, sonorous but vague and utterly meaningless, by which nations no less than individuals often seek to disguise from themselves, as well as from others, purposes which if candidly avowed would shock the consciences even of those intent on them.

It is very necessary to point out here and to emphasize that there are but three conditions which a conquering nation can impose on a prostrate nation, or a strong nation exact from a weak one: annexation of its territory, which of course includes the people inhabiting it; seizure of its property, in the form of war ships or of money exacted as indemnity; destruction of its property, which comprises sinking of its ships or dismantling of its fortresses.

Now surely the human family which has already suffered such appalling losses of men, and of capital amounting to twenty billion dollars from its industrial forces, and which is threatened with the dreadful possibility of losing many millions more men, and practically the total extinction of European capital, has a right to know the precise conditions on which can be ended the war, that has brought upon it all these disasters, actual and potential. Above all, the President of these United States—as head of the nation holding first place in the family of nations—whose attempts to maintain neutrality have been embarrassed and may yet

be frustrated by unforeseen incidents (which these belligerents themselves may not be able to avoid) has the right to ask that each side state frankly and fully what it seeks to achieve by this war—that is to say the terms on which it would make peace. Such a request on his part would not be an act of hostility to either side, but an act of benevolence and of justice to the entire human family, including the belligerents themselves. Remember, it is not for a moment suggested that he should undertake to prescribe the terms of peace. That would be attempting to assume himself the very power which these belligerents are fighting to acquire, and to obtain which they have plunged the world in this dreadful strife. But so long as no attempt is made to indicate or even influence the terms of peace, no belligerent could complain of being asked to state just what it would require before consenting to lay down arms, since the statement of its demands might be the very means of obtaining them.

A request that each side disclose the conditions on which it would consent to peace would not of course be answered, by repetitions of those sonorous but vague expressions of which all the belligerents have been prolific, but which instead of defining the real objects for which they are battling have served merely to obscure them.

The only answer which would fully meet such a request by the President is a clear, definite statement by each side of the exact territory that it demands for itself or of which it wishes to deprive the other; the precise amount of money it would require, the number of ships to be surrendered or sunk; the particular fortresses it wants destroyed. And I venture this prediction: Should the President induce all these belligerents to state definitely in terms of territory, indemnity or property, the conditions of peace they are ready to accept, the demands on both sides would prove to be not very far apart; and that means formal negotiations for definite peace would be in progress within a few weeks.

Remember I say these demands would not be found

very far apart if the President succeeds in having the conditions of peace formulated *now* when neither side is in such a position of advantage that it can afford to despise or disregard the opinion and conscience of the world by making demands obviously extravagant or unreasonably severe. But if the conditions of peace are suffered to remain undisclosed until one side lies prostrate under the heel of the other, then the victors will be in a position to disregard alike the conscience of civilization and the public opinion of their own countries. And in that event the terms of peace—or rather the terms of submission—will be governed by rancor inflamed to fury, rather than by statesmanship enlightened through justice.

In all these warring countries there is a very strong desire for peace. But each one is convinced that its utter destruction is the object of this war, and that by fighting alone can its national life be saved. And this frame of mind is due largely if not entirely to those perversely distracting phrases we have been considering. If each country were apprised definitely and clearly of the territory or money which its rulers were fighting to obtain, its conscience would be quick to revolt from anything like a scheme of wanton injury or spoliation. If one side declined to disclose its purposes, even though requested to state them by the President, no action by this country would be necessary or advisable. Refusal by any belligerent to answer such an inquiry could be left with perfect safety to the conscience of mankind.

The judgment of civilization and the public opinion of each country are, then, the moral forces by which this dreadful conflict can be ended. They are rendered inefficient now because they are kept in ignorance of the real objects for which millions of men have been destroyed and many more millions are doomed to destruction and mutilation if the war be suffered to continue. The President of the United States is in a position where he can make these moral forces effective by causing both sides to make clear their purposes

while the war is still in progress. And I repeat that in doing this the President will not be violating neutrality but he will be observing scrupulously the very nicest requirements of international comity or politeness.

Now it may be objected why is the President of the United States clothed with any higher authority to take such action than the head of any other neutral state? Would it not be advisable, some will ask, to secure cooperation of other neutral states—to effect a league of neutrals, is the expression widely used—for the purpose of securing peace? The answer is clear. The President of the United States has a special warrant for asking these nations to declare the conditions on which they will make peace, arising under the Providence of God from incidents of the war directly and peculiarly affecting the people of this country.

In the course of this war we have suffered serious injuries from both sides, and questions arising from them are now actually pending. And each has taken such a position with reference to the acts of which we complain that recurrence of them is exceedingly probable if not inevitable. If these acts all belonged to the past they would naturally, I might say necessarily be left to settlement by diplomatic negotiations. But when they are likely to recur the President may find himself confronted with the question whether he is not bound to take measures for preventing them. Now whether he should adopt measures of prevention or suffer these grievances to remain subjects of negotiation might very largely depend upon the length of time that the conflict is likely to last. For, obviously, if its duration would probably be short the likelihood of recurrence would be greatly diminished, and, therefore, measures of prevention might not be considered necessary. If on the other hand the war is likely to be prolonged, recurrence of these injuries would be exceedingly probable and under such conditions he might feel that prevention was his duty.

The President has a clear right, then, to ask from either

belligerent information which may enable him to determine his own course with respect to some act for which that belligerent is responsible, provided that the information would not involve disclosures that might affect success of its war measures. The President would not be justified, of course, in asking one of the belligerents to disclose the extent of its forces, or their disposition, or how near it was to exhaustion of men or materials of war. But there could be no objection to his asking each belligerent to say just what it is fighting for, since information on that head cannot effect its military operations while it would shed some light upon the probable length of the war. If, for instance, one side declared its determination to continue fighting till the other side was exterminated, that would indicate a war of long duration and the President might feel justified in taking measures to prevent injuries which very likely would be of frequent recurrence. On the other hand, if it were found that the demands on all sides might easily be reconciled, a speedy cessation of hostilities would be probable and then the President would undoubtedly feel justified in leaving adjustment of our own complaints to settlement by diplomacy.

Now the President of the United States is the only person in all the world whom the tide of events has placed in this position. There is here no suggestion whatever of force, but merely that information be requested which may aid the President in determining his policy concerning acts of the countries to whom the request is addressed. The fact that such information afforded to the President would make clear the real objects of this war in terms that can be understood by everyone, and that with such light to inform them the moral forces of civilization will be enabled to effect peace, cannot be a valid objection to asking for it, but furnishes additional reasons why it should be most strenuously sought. One thing is perfectly certain: civilization will not enforce peace on any conditions except those of justice. And peace established on justice will lead to reconciliation, per-

manent and complete, of all these warring countries.

But it may be asked, even if such action by the President should result in peace would not these warring nations at once begin extensive preparations for renewal of the conflict on a scale commensurate with the requirements of modern wars, and would not these impoverish the world almost as grievously as waging war itself? Here again I answer, Providence has placed in the hands of the President power not merely to effect restoration of peace but to secure general disarmament, and that too without assuming an attitude of hostility to other powers, or attempting to assert authority or control over any of them. And the measures he has already announced his determination to recommend are precisely those which, if adopted, must, in my judgment, lead inevitably to general disarmament.

After this war it is hardly possible that any of the countries engaged in it will be in a position to maintain a huge armament and at the same time leave anything like sufficient means of subsistence to its population. Certainly none will be eager to undertake such a burden unless in the hope of making itself first among the armed nations of the world. But such a primacy in military establishments this country can prevent any other country from securing by the simple course of establishing ourselves the strongest armament of all.

Without undertaking to discuss here or to anticipate any of the proposals for preparedness which the President will submit to Congress next week, this much is perfectly obvious: if at the end of this war other leading nations continue to arm then we must arm too. And in that event we must outarm the strongest of them. One conclusion is inevitable from the recent experience of the world. No country can afford to remain unarmed when all around it other countries are steadily, and indeed feverishly, prosecuting preparations for war. It is believed by a good many that one or more of the great nations brought to the verge of bankruptcy by this

war might be tempted by the extent of our possessions and the vast wealth of our population to attack this country in the hope of exacting a huge indemnity from us. I do not think this at all probable. Indeed I think it most unlikely that after the experience of the last sixteen months any nation could still harbor the delusion that there can be any profit in war, no matter how successfully it may be waged. Nevertheless such an attack is not any more unlikely than the breaking out of the war now raging was eighteen months ago. Preparedness I believe means that we must be prepared at all times to meet any eventuality. So long as we have the largest possessions to tempt attack we must maintain the largest armaments to defend them, both by land and sea. If our security is to depend on force we cannot trust to the benevolence or friendship or forbearance of any other nation. We must depend on ourselves alone and on the armed might we can establish.

But if all nations will consent to forego these extensive military establishments, then we would gladly lead the world in disarmament. With respect to armaments, I believe our position will prove ultimately to be this: we stand ready to offer all nations perfect equality with us, but it must be an equality of disarmament. If an armed world is to emerge from the war, then we will be first in armaments as befits our position among nations. And this position all nations know we have the power to take and maintain.

Now I believe there is no country, however warlike its disposition, which would not prefer to share first place as an armed power with all others than take second place to any one nation. And since second place among armed nations is the highest that will be left open to the strongest of them when we ourselves take first place, I am quite certain they will all become eager to rid themselves of burdens which crush their populations to the earth and which no longer can result in making any of them the predominant military force of the world. A general understanding then could

easily be reached that no country would maintain a military establishment greater than was necessary to preserve peace within its own borders—say a force equal to one per cent. of its population. The beneficent results of general disarmament would be incalculable. Dismissal from unproductive idleness in barracks of some five or six millions of men to productive fields of industry, and restoration of capital amounting to between two or three billions of dollars every year from wasteful preparations for war to the channels of useful commerce would repair the ravages of this conflict within five years. And then the world would enter upon a period of prosperity such as the children of men have never known. But this happy outcome will be possible only if this war be ended *now*. If it continue until many millions of men in the flower of their youth are incapacitated from labor and practically the whole capital of the world is destroyed, then it is difficult to see how the measure of prosperity we have enjoyed in the past can ever be restored or how even the human race can be preserved.

Such an agreement for general disarmament would not greatly change the international relations which have governed the world before this war. Mobilization of an army has always been considered an act of hostility by neighboring countries. This would merely put organization of an army on the same footing as mobilization of an army is now. Should any country undertake to increase its military establishment beyond the force necessary to preserve peace within its own borders, then this country could always stand ready to outstrip such preparations for war by more extensive preparations on our part. And this would end them.

And thus we find the whole course of events has been directed by Almighty God so as to make this country the agency by which all the moral forces of Christendom can be made effective for the restoration of peace—not the troubled peace of conquest and submission, but the permanent peace—the blessed peace—of reconciliation and justice; and for the liberation of humanity from the curse of armaments.

I am aware that the peace for which I am pleading—a peace permanent and universal—will be characterized by many as a vain dream, an aspiration wholly irreconcilable with human nature. War, they will insist, is such an essential feature of existence that as men have always waged it in the past so they will always be found either waging it or preparing to wage it.

Now of course if this be true, if war is indeed an essential condition of human existence, denunciation of it is but vain rebellion against the dispensations of Almighty God. But I deny that such a peace is unattainable or that the desire for it is a vain aspiration of enthusiasm. And in taking this position I plant myself upon unassailable ground, for I am merely contending that nothing is impossible which has already occurred. What man has done that man can repeat. And what man has done under conditions that were difficult and almost desperate, he can certainly repeat under conditions that are vastly more favorable.

Peace for the sake of peace—not as a measure of policy for the advantage of one nation at the expense of others, but as a measure of justice for the benefit of all nations and all the children of men inhabiting them—~~has~~ already been established in this world. Once—and once only, so far as I know—was peace established on any other ground than as a matter of policy for advantage of the state consenting to it or enforcing it, but that was in a time of even more widespread conflict than this, and when the disastrous results of prolonged war which are now potential were actually scourging the human family and driving it to extinction.

Nearly nine centuries ago the wars and disturbances that had continued almost without intermission for five hundred years after the fall of Rome had exhausted Western Europe to such a degree that men were driven by famine to feed on the flesh of each other. Raoul Glaber, the contemporary writer to whose chronicles we are indebted for knowledge

of these events, tells us that travellers were waylaid on the highways and killed, not by robbers for any valuables of which their bodies might be despoiled, but by starving men, that the bodies themselves might be used as food.

He tells us of a wretched human being who posed as a hermit near Macon, and who lured to the hut he occupied a man and his wife, by offering them hospitality for the night. The man, while sitting on a stool, saw under the bench that served as a couch several human skulls. Resisting persistent efforts of the hermit to detain them, he and his wife escaped to the neighboring town where they informed the authorities of what they had seen. A posse went to the hut and there found no less than forty-seven skeletons of men, women and children who had been killed by the hermit and their flesh either eaten by him or sold to persons perishing for want of other food. The execution of this monster, Glaber tells us he himself witnessed.

In this crisis, when under the double scourge of famine and war, population declined so rapidly that its extinction seemed inevitable, the Church proceeded to invoke the moral forces of which She is custodian for preservation of the race. She forbade every man under the severest ecclesiastical penalties from attempting or perpetrating any violence against other men. Overawed by the terrible conditions in which they found themselves the great ones of the earth obeyed her prohibition. The peace which followed was declared to be the Peace of God. The man who violated it was pronounced anathema, outlawed from all human association, refused even the right of sanctuary which was denied to no other human being.

Glaber says that immediately, as if to show God's approval of this peace, the seasons again became propitious, and for three years prosperity such as no man could recall smiled upon the earth. Indeed the blessings which crowned this peace were so abundant that cupidity was reawakened among the powerful, and it proved too strong for the resolutions of morality and the restraints of religion.

But its beneficent results were not forgotten. The Church which had found Herself unable to maintain permanently the Peace of God by appeals to the temporal interests of men, succeeded a few years later in establishing the Truce of God by appeals to the spiritual faith of men. She began by prohibiting all men from engaging in war or deeds of violence between noon on Saturday, the eve of Our Lord's Resurrection, and six o'clock on the following Monday. This prohibition having proved effective, the Church soon extended it first from Wednesday, the eve of Our Lord's betrayal, till Monday morning, and afterwards to include the whole of Lent and Advent, the Ember Days and the period between the vigil of each great festival and the day following the close of its Octave, so that less than one-third of the year remained what might be called an "open season" for fighting.

This Truce of God was quite generally observed throughout Europe. Under its influence the energies of men no longer wholly absorbed in war turned to industry. And when at the end of that century Pope Urban II preached the First Crusade he simply proclaimed anew the Truce of God among all Christian princes, forbidding them to engage in wars among themselves and urging them to unite for liberation of the land which had been sanctified by the footsteps of Our Divine Redeemer from the polluting domination of the infidel who had seized it. The Crusades failed in effecting the immediate object for which they were organized, but they constituted a movement that changed the whole aspect of the world. The necessity of providing the Crusading armies with means of transportation and subsistence led to a revival of industry. Communes were founded, manufactures established, the arts cultivated. This whole industrial civilization of ours had its origin in that movement which established peace among Christian nations, not for the benefit of any country but for the benefit of all men, and, therefore, for the glory of Almighty God.

Chivalry was the lay force by which the Popes during

the Eleventh Century succeeded in imposing for a few years the Peace of God and for many years the Truce of God on a military age. Today, in the Twentieth Century, this new Chivalry of ours, this Knighthood of Columbus, is the first lay force to answer the Pope's attempt to re-establish and make permanent the Peace of God in this industrial age. And if the Peace of God was actually established, even for a few years, in an age when rapine and conquest were supposed to be the only pathway to prosperity and arms the only calling that honorable men could follow, who shall say that the Peace of God cannot be re-established and made permanent now in this age when men have enjoyed the extraordinary prosperity which has been the fruit of peace long unbroken; and when not merely our own Order but all the moral forces of Christendom are ranging themselves behind the Pontiff, who is the Prince of Peace, in his efforts to end this war and make its recurrence impossible?

Personally, I believe that if peace be once established disarmament would follow naturally, and to avoid recurrence of war would at once become the passion of the human race. The notion that fierce international hatreds must long survive this conflict is utterly unsound. Men are never embittered against each other merely because they have fought in war. No nations are more warmly attached to each other than those which have contended valiantly in battle. Russia and Japan were locked in a deadly conflict but ten years ago. Now they are allies fighting not through obligations of a treaty, but from a sense of mutual interest and a strong sense of mutual respect.

This is the first time in the history of the world when many nations engaged in war and where everyone has acquitted itself with distinction and glory. Nations that have contended against each other with such valor cannot be devoid of mutual respect, and mutual respect is the surest foundation of peace and amity.

But there is another reason for believing that if peace were once concluded war would not be likely to recur at least for many generations. The two incentives to war that have always been most powerful are thirst of conquest and thirst of glory. This war has satisfied neither appetite. It has proved beyond all doubt that fighting does not pay. No possible conquest of territory could repay any one of these belligerents for the frightful cost of waging this war or even the cost of preparing for it. And while heroism has become a commonplace of this conflict the word glory has never been mentioned in connection with it. Not a single name has emerged in dazzling renown from battle. All the splendors that formerly decorated war have disappeared. Armies are no longer marching phalanxes clad in glittering uniforms that present imposing spectacles to the eye. They are composed now of men in the somberest garments hoping to elude observation, caked in mud, burrowing under ground like original cavemen and there, directing against other men plunged in conditions equally sordid and disgusting, dreadful engines of destruction, which kill and mutilate vast numbers—beating them out of all semblance to humanity; the dismembered dead left unburied by tens and hundreds of thousands; the air poisoned and the earth made loathsome by this awful perversion of agencies established by civilization for the improvement of human conditions and the lengthening of human days, to destruction of human possessions and the ending of human days.

Such a war offers no single element that is alluring or that could tempt men to renew it. It is a sordid slaughter, an unspeakable stench which after stifling part of the world and nauseating the remainder, now threatens to destroy the whole of it; from which if the human race once escape, any proposal that might even suggest a possibility of its recurrence will be abhorred even as a proposal to revive cannibalism would have been abhorred eighteen months ago.

With the moral forces of Christendom denouncing the

inherent wickedness of war, and all recent experiences making clear its wastefulness, its sordidness, its unspeakable loathsomeness, it is inconceivable that men will remain indifferent to the necessity of ending it finally and forever.

One thing is absolutely certain: this war must end war, or it must end the world. It is now perfectly clear that the human family cannot survive renewals of such destructive fury or continual preparations for them which are almost equally destructive.

But this evening affords us special reasons to view the future with hope and, indeed, with confidence. Our Faith forbids us to doubt that the prayers of the Pontiff for peace, supported as we here see they are by all the moral forces of the whole Christian world, will be heard. And we have the assurance of the Divine Author of Christianity that whatever is asked in His Name will be granted. We cannot always discern the agencies which Almighty God selects to effect His purposes of beneficence while they are yet unfulfilled. Looking back at them the means He has chosen to accomplish His will are always clear. But we can already see how He has raised up here a force through which His peace can be secured. The course I have suggested may not be the only method open to the President for bringing about peace by scrupulously correct exercise of his unquestioned powers, and without in any way compromising our neutrality. He with his wider information and his much wider abilities may find another and a much better method to accomplish this glorious result.

Everything that I have said on this head it should be understood is intended merely by way of suggestion. The President, and the President alone, is charged with control of our foreign relations. Every citizen has the right, and indeed it is his duty, to criticise freely any measure or proposal of the President or any other officer affecting our domestic conditions. With respect to measures of purely national concern, the President can only propose them. The people

alone can dispose of them. And the people who must decide them are entitled to all the light that the fullest popular discussion can shed on them. Matters affecting countries over which this country exercises authority, direct or indirect, I count as of national rather than international concern. But this country can take no attitude towards an entirely foreign country except such as the President prescribes. That attitude the citizen must support or else he should remain silent. For he cannot oppose it without supporting the power with whom the President is in controversy, correspondence or negotiation. When therefore the President speaks to another nation on behalf of this nation, all Americans I believe should be found standing behind him—none in front of him. Concerning the matters I have discussed here the President has taken no position whatever, and therefore I have felt free to offer these suggestions for his consideration as well as for yours. Whether they commend themselves to his approval or they be rejected or ignored, the fact that Almighty God has placed such resources as I have indicated within the reach of such a man as Woodrow Wilson justifies the hope—nay, it imposes the belief—that this desperate conflict will prove to be not a cataclysm in which Christian civilization is tottering through fury and destruction to irretrievable ruin, but a great dynamic movement through which it is casting aside conventions and traditions that have become outworn and therefore restrictive before leading the human family upwards through peace and justice to a plane of prosperity—material and moral—higher than has ever yet been attained, grander than we are able now to conceive.

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